

THERMAE AI





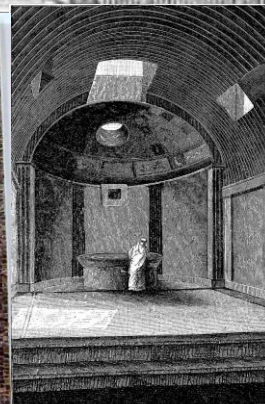
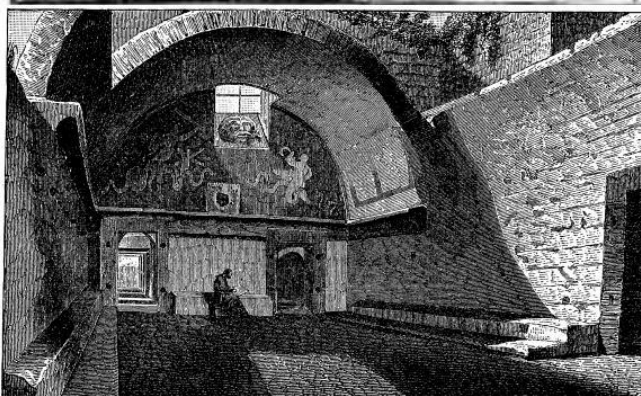
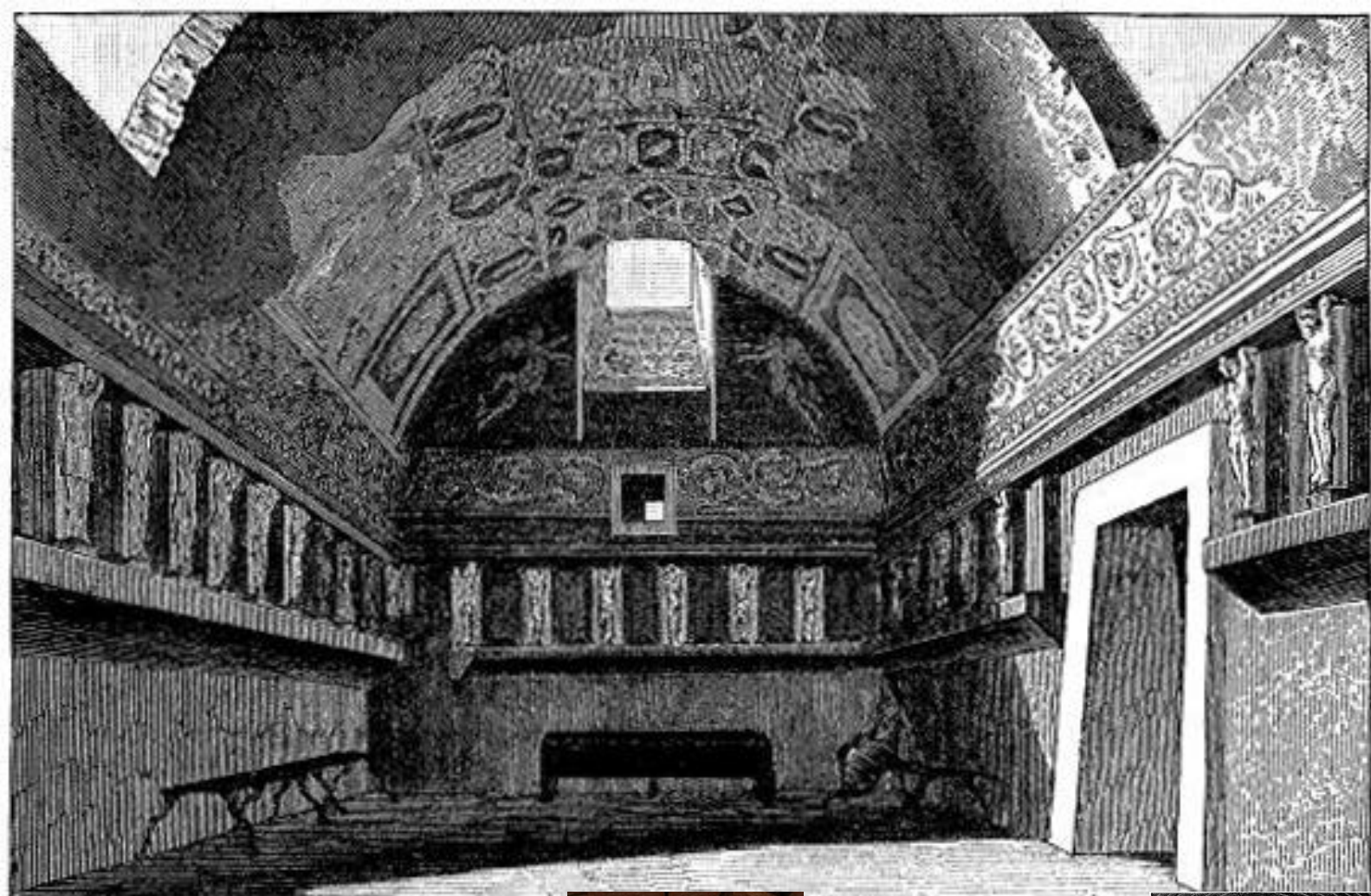
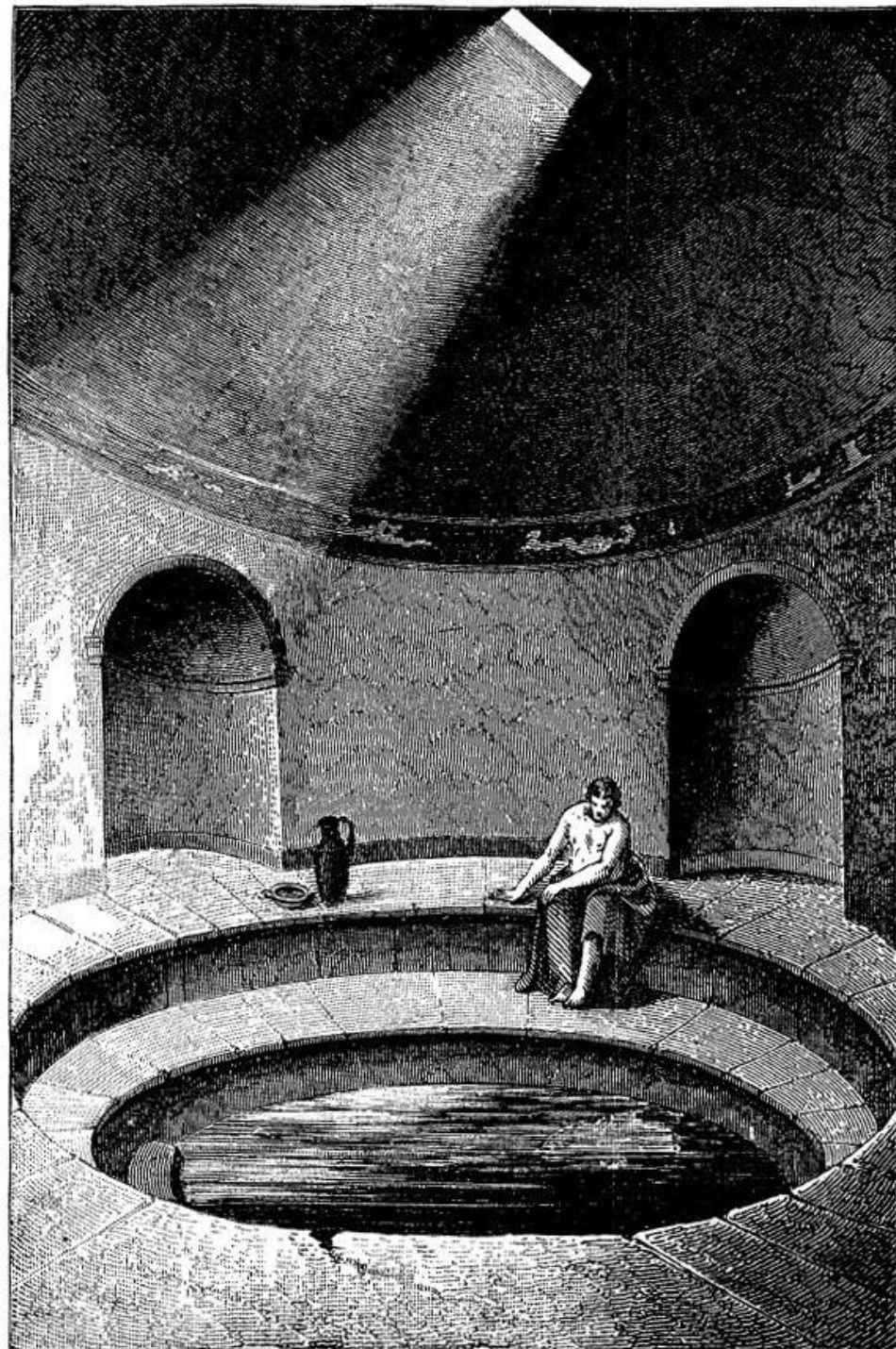




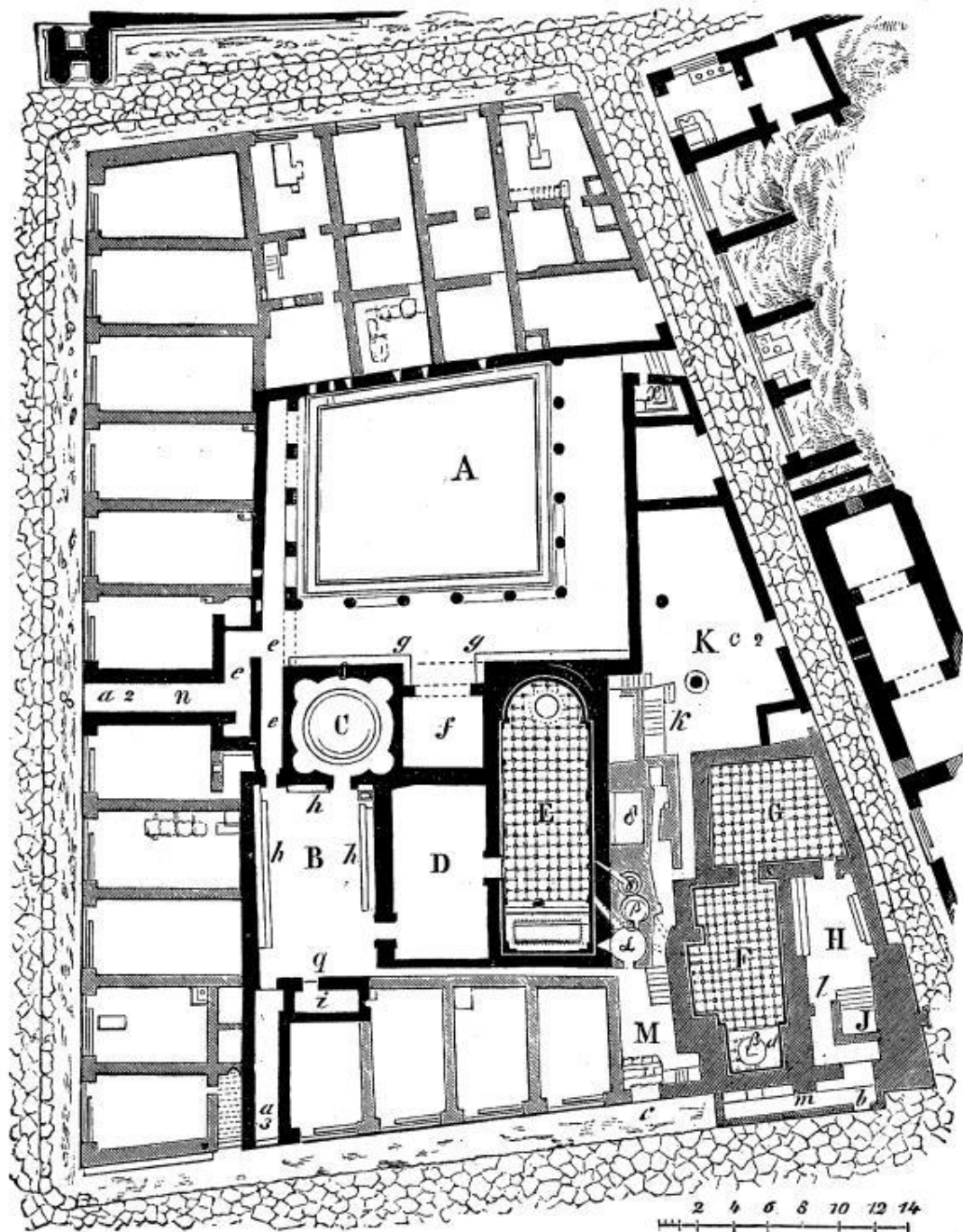












Plan of the Old Baths at Pompeii. (Overbeck.)

**In ancient Rome, thermae were facilities for bathing. Thermae usually refers to the large imperial bath complexes, while balneae were smaller-scale facilities, public or private, that existed in great numbers throughout Rome.**

**Most Roman cities had at least one – if not many – such buildings, which were centers not only for bathing, but socializing and reading as well. Bathhouses were also provided for wealthy private villas, town houses, and forts. They were supplied with water from an adjacent river or stream, or within cities by aqueduct. The water would be heated by fire then channelled into the caldarium (hot bathing room). The design of baths is discussed by Vitruvius in *De architectura*.**

**A public bath was built around three principal rooms: the tepidarium (warm room), the caldarium (hot room), and the frigidarium (cold room). Some thermae also featured steam baths: the sudatorium, a moist steam bath, and the laconicum, a dry hot room.**



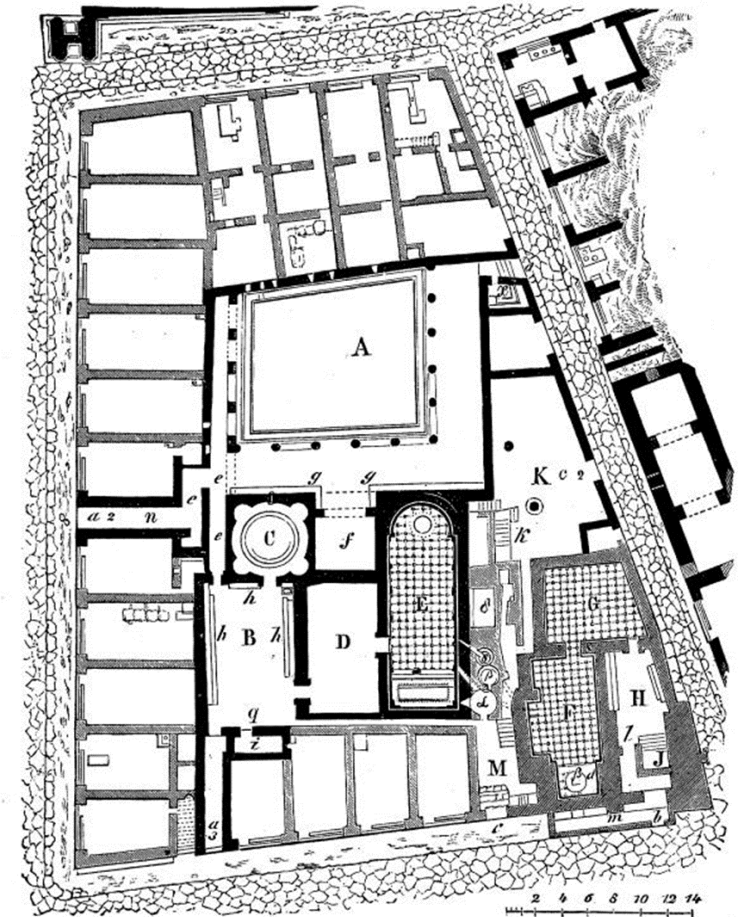








**This specific complex consists of a double set of baths, one for men and one for women. It has six different entrances from the street, one of which (b) gives admission to the smaller women's set only. Five other entrances lead to the men's department, of which two (c and c2), communicate directly with the furnaces, and the other three (a3, a2, a) with the bathing apartments.**



Plan of the Old Baths at Pompeii. (Overbeck.)









**Passing through the principal entrance, a (barely visible, right side, one third of the total length from above), which is removed from the street by a narrow footway surrounding the building and after descending three steps, the bather would find a small chamber on his left (x) with a toilet (latrina), and proceed into a covered portico (g, g), which ran round three sides of an open court (palaestra,[clarification needed] A). These together formed the vestibule of the baths (vestibulum balnearum), in which the servants waited.**







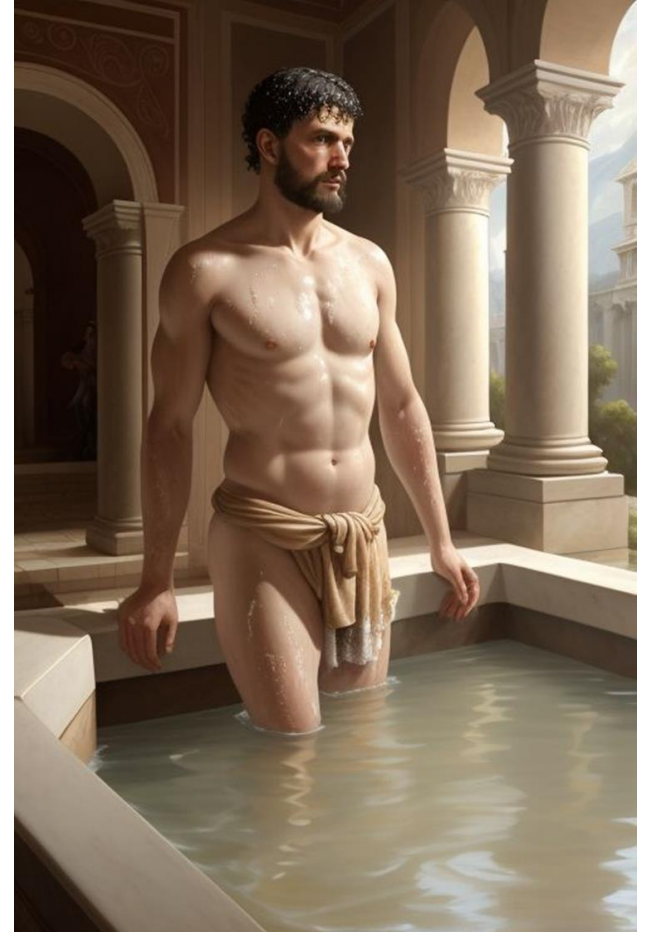








**Pompeian interior, The  
Thermae by Forum by  
Joseph Theodor  
Hansen (1848–1912)**





**From the apodyterium the bather who wished to go through the warm bath and sweating process entered the tepidarium (D). It did not contain water either at Pompeii nor at the Baths of Hippias, but was merely heated with warm air of an agreeable temperature, in order to prepare the body for the great heat of the vapour and warm baths, and, upon returning, to prevent a too-sudden transition to the open air. In the baths at Pompeii this chamber also served as an apodyterium for those who took the warm bath. The walls feature a number of separate compartments or recesses for receiving the garments when taken off. The compartments are divided from each other by figures of the kind called atlantes or telamones, which project from the walls and support a rich cornice above them in a wide arch.**

**Three bronze benches were also found in the room, which was heated as well by its contiguity to the hypocaust of the adjoining chamber, as by a brazier of bronze (foculus), in which the charcoal ashes were still remaining when the excavation was made. Sitting and perspiring beside such a brazier was called ad flammam sudare.**

**The tepidarium is generally the most highly ornamented room in baths. It was merely a room to sit and be anointed in. In the Forum Baths at Pompeii the floor is mosaic, the arched ceiling adorned with stucco and painting on a coloured ground, the walls red.**









**From the tepidarium a door opened into the caldarium (E), whose mosaic floor was directly above the furnace or hypocaust. Its walls also were hollow, behind the decorated plaster one part of the wall was made from interconnected hollow bricks called tubuli lateraci, forming a great flue filled with heated air. At one end was a round basin (labrum), and at the other a quadrangular bathing place (puelos, alveus, solium, calida piscina), approached from the platform by steps. The labrum held cold water, for pouring upon the bather's head before he left the room. These basins are of marble in the Old Baths, but we hear of alvei of solid silver. Because of the great heat of the room, the caldarium was but slightly ornamented.**

**The laconicum (i.e. Spartan, sc. balneum, "bath") was the dry sweating room of the Roman thermae, sometimes contiguous to the caldarium or hot room. The name was given to it (Laconia: Sparta) since it was the only form of warm bath that the Spartans admitted. The laconicum was usually a circular room with niches in the axes of the diagonals and was covered by a conical roof with a circular opening at the top, according to Vitruvius (v. 10), from which a brazen shield is suspended by chains, capable of being so lowered and raised as to regulate the temperature.**

**Sometimes, as in the old baths at Pompeii, the laconicum was provided in an apse at one end of the caldarium, but as a rule it was a separate room raised to a higher temperature and had no bath in it. In addition to the hypocaust under the floor, the wall was lined with ceramic flue pipes.**

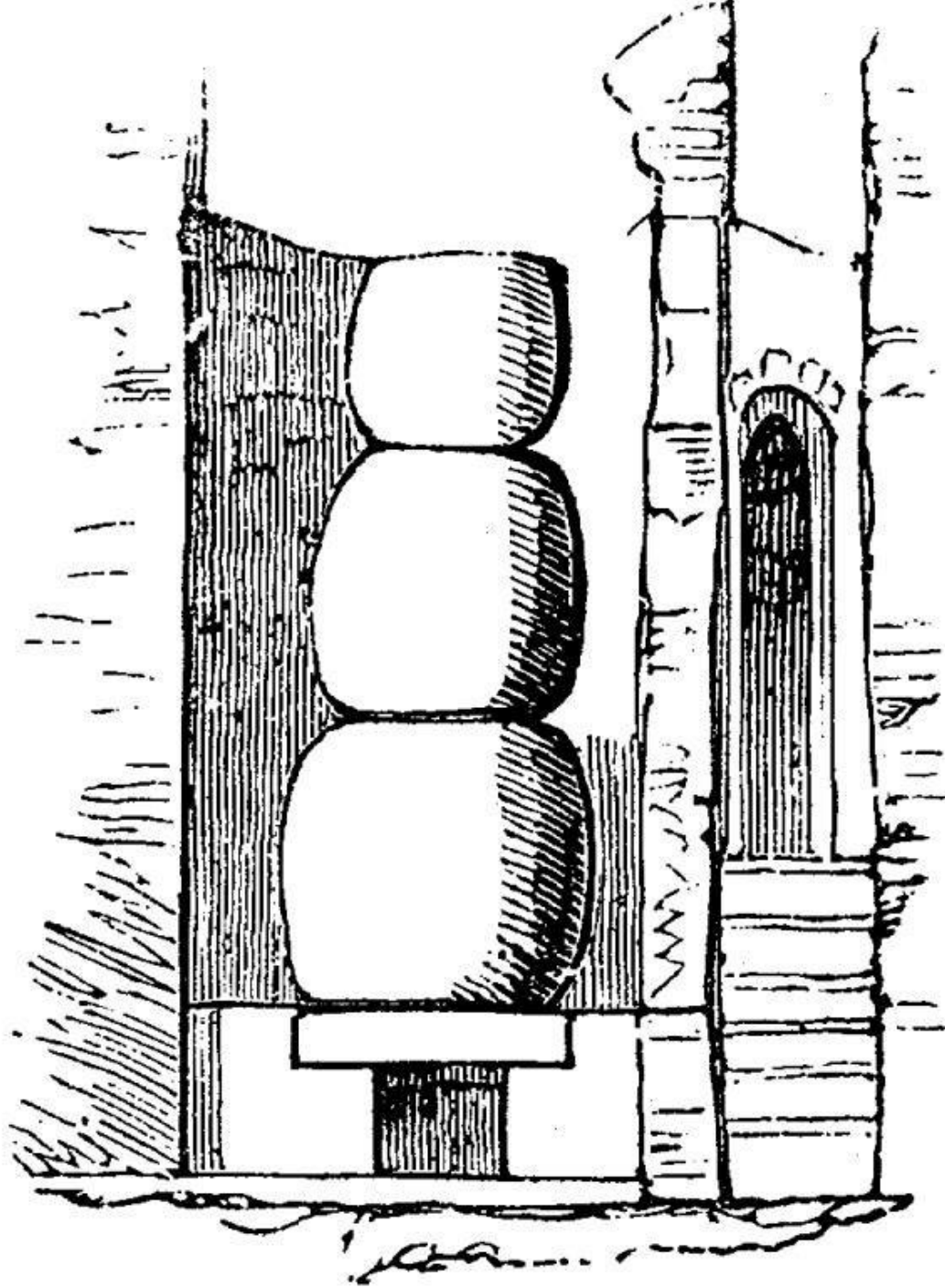




# Laconicum at Chedworth Roman Villa, England







## **A three-tiered water boiler (miliarium)**

**The apodyterium has a passage (q) communicating with the mouth of the furnace (i), called praefurnium or propigneum and, passing down that passage, we reach the chamber M, into which the praefurnium projects, and which is entered from the street at c. It was assigned to the fornacatores, or persons in charge of the fires. Of its two staircases, one leads to the roof of the baths, and one to the boilers containing the water.**

**There were three boilers, one of which (caldarium) held the hot water; a second, the tepid (tepidarium); and the third, the cold (frigidarium). The warm water was filled into the warm bath by a pipe through the wall, marked on the plan.**



## Women's bath

**The adjoining, smaller set of baths were assigned to the women. The entrance is by the door b, which conducts into a small vestibule (m) and from there into the apodyterium (H), which, like the one in the men's bath, has a seat (pulvinus, gradus) on either side built up against the wall. This opens upon a cold bath (J), answering to the natatio of the men's set, but of much smaller dimensions. There are four steps on the inside to descend into it. Opposite to the door of entrance into the apodyterium is another doorway which leads to the tepidarium (G), which also communicates with the thermal chamber (F), on one side of which is a warm bath in a square recess, and at the farther extremity the labrum.**







**Virtual historical reconstruction of the Roman Baths in Weißenburg, Germany, using data from laser scan technology**



**A number of Roman public baths survive, either as ruins or in varying degrees of conservation. Among the more notable are the Roman baths of Bath and the Ravenglass Roman Bath House in England as well as the Baths of Caracalla, of Diocletian, of Titus, of Trajan in Rome and the baths of Sofia, Serdica and Varna.[30] Probably the most complete are various public and private baths in Pompeii and nearby sites. The Hammam Essalihine is still in use today.**

**In 1910, Pennsylvania Station was opened in New York City, with a Main Waiting Room that borrowed heavily from the frigidarium of the Baths of Diocletian, especially with the use of repeated groin vaults in the ceiling. The success of the design of Pennsylvania Station in turn was copied in other railroad stations around the world.**









